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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined initial to fifth periodic reports of Seychelles

Addendum

Information provided by Seychelles in follow-up to the concluding observations*

[Date received: 14 July 2016]

Note: The present document is being issued in English, French and Spanish only.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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In paragraph 48 of its concluding observations (CEDAW/C/SYC/CO/1-5), the Committee requested Seychelles to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 17 and 23.

Paragraph 17

National machinery for the advancement of women

The Committee, in accordance with its general recommendation No. 6 on effective national machinery and publicity, and the guidance provided in the Beijing Platform for Action, in particular regarding the conditions necessary for the effective functioning of national machineries, recommends that the State party:

(a) **Strengthen the Gender Secretariat and provide it with the authority, decision-making power and human and financial resources necessary for it to work effectively for the promotion of gender equality and the enjoyment by women of their rights, including its capacity for effective coordination and cooperation among the various gender equality and human rights mechanisms and with civil society;**

(b) **Ensure the effective functioning of the gender mainstreaming strategy;**

(c) **Finalize, without delay, the national gender policy and its action plan, and ensure the effective implementation of the measures aiming at strengthening policies, programmes and campaigns addressing gender stereotyping; and develop a national action plan for the implementation of the present concluding observations.**

Response

- The National Gender Policy will be launched early 2016 following Cabinet's approval.
- The Gender Plan of Action is to be finalized with outstanding sectors to ensure that it is aligned with their sectoral plans once the policy has been approved.
- A Plan of Action (2013-2015) for the implementation of the present concluding observations was developed.
- CEDAW focal persons in key ministries have been identified and their role is to coordinate and collect information within their respective organization in line with the concluding observations.

Paragraph 23

Violence against women

The Committee urges the State party:

(a) **To adopt a comprehensive strategy to combat violence against women;**

Response

- The Social Affairs Department is currently reviewing its Domestic Violence Strategy 2008-2012 and Costed National Action Plan for Gender Based Violence 2010-2015 to align it with the National Gender Policy.

(b) To adopt a comprehensive law on violence against women that specifically criminalizes acts of domestic violence, including marital rape, and ensure that acts of domestic violence are tried by the criminal courts rather than the Family Tribunal;

Response

- The process for the enactment of a Domestic Violence Act is in an advanced stage. All discussions and consultations are being finalized and it is expected that within the first quarter of 2016 the Attorney General would have pronounced itself on the final draft for approval by the Cabinet.

(c) To encourage women and girls who are victims of violence to report cases to the police, by raising awareness about the criminal nature of such acts, de-stigmatizing victims and providing systematic training to judges, prosecutors, the police and law enforcement and medical personnel on standardized, gender-sensitive procedures for dealing with victims of violence against women and effectively investigating complaints;

Response

Training and capacity-building is ongoing on a targeted basis. Work to date includes:

- A capacity-building workshop on Gender Based Violence was held in December 2013 for Faith-based organizations, which was the first national workshop for this targeted audience. The workshop was attended by 42 participants representing 18 Faith Based Organizations and the Social Affairs Department. The aim of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of FBOs in the fight against GBV particularly Domestic Violence and also to secure their commitment in assisting with GBV cases. The moral, spiritual, legal and technical aspects of GBV were also highlighted.
- A sensitization session was held on Gender Based Violence with regards to evidence collection in cases of sexual abuse and rape for 50 health officials in December 2013. The main aims of the session were to highlight the importance of systematic data collection and dissemination of evidence reporting in such cases and to strengthen evidence reporting.
- In January 2015, a four-day training was undertaken with the technical assistance of "Victims Support UK" to support victims of domestic violence. A total of 21 participants from State and non-State actors attended the training. The aims of the course were to increase the awareness of the impact of domestic violence and abuse and the issues facing victims and to provide participants with more knowledge, skills and confidence to support victims of domestic violence and abuse. A similar session for perpetrators of such crimes is also being considered.

- An interactive session on Gender Based Violence Prevention led by a speaker from the "US Institute of Men Stopping Violence" was held in September 2015 in partnership with the US Embassy. A total of 60 participants attended the training. The audience was predominantly male participants from law enforcement agencies, including the army. The main objectives of the session were to mobilize men to prevent male violence against women and to identify community based solutions to prevent male violence against women.

(d) To ensure expeditious access to justice for women victims of all forms of violence and prosecute any such acts of violence, upon complaint by the victim or ex officio, and adequately punish perpetrators;

(e) To strengthen victim assistance and rehabilitation through the establishment of a comprehensive care system for victims of gender-based violence, including measures to ensure their access to free legal aid, medical and psychological support, shelters and counselling and rehabilitation services.